

Message Text

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DEPT PLEASE PASS ARA CAPITALS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAS VE US

SUBJ: VISIT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER; VIEWS OF VENEZUELAN
PRESIDENT ON FUTURE OF OAS

REF: CARACAS 1351

1. DURING INTERVIEW REPORTED REFTEL, PRESIDENT PEREZ MADE A LENGTHY EXPOSITION OF WHAT HE PROFESSED TO REGARD AS AN ERROR IN US TACTICS IN GOING OUTSIDE THE MECHANISM OF THE OAS. HE SAID, "AT TLATELOLCO THE GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED DID NOT HAVE THE PROTECTION OF THE OAS CHARTER. IT IS BETTER THEREFORE THAT WE MEET WITHIN THAT CHARTER RATHER THAN OUTSIDE." HE SPOKE WITH EMPHASIS OF THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE OAS.

2. I RESPONDED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO VENEZUELA MIGHT AFFORD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW. ON THIS THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS MOST PLEASED AT THE "POSITIVE NATURE" OF THE SECRETARY'S TALK LAST WEEK WITH THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND THAT HE WELCOMED THE KISSINGER VISIT. HOWEVER, FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN HE HOPED THE SECRETARY WOULD NOT COME TO CARACAS BEFORE THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL BECAUSE HE, PEREZ, HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT MEXICO IN THE LAST FORTNIGHT OF MARCH.

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3. RETURNING TO A DISCUSSION OF THE OAS, PRESIDENT PEREZ DEPRECATED THE CANDIDACIES OF THE TWO LEADING CONTENDERS FOR THE POSITION OF SECRETARY GENERAL. HE SPOKE WITH ALMOST EQUAL DISPARAGEMENT OF THE FORMER DOMINICAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF PARAGUAY. WHEN I ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OF BURELLI RIVAS OR ORFILA AS POSSIBLE CANDIDATES, PEREZ MADE NO COMMENT WITH REGARD TO THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR BUT DID SAY HE HAD DECIDED NOT RPT NOT TO SPONSOR BURELLI BECAUSE HE THOUGHT VENEZUELA WAS PROBABLY NOT TOO POPULAR OR TOO MUCH IN THE CONFIDENCE OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO PUT UP SUCH A CANDIDATE. HOWEVER, HE WOULD MOST CERTAINLY SUPPORT BURELLI RIVAS IF SOME OTHER GOVERNMENT WOULD PROPOSE HIS CANDIDACY, AND HAD TOLD HIM SO.

4. ALTHOUGH NOT IN A PEEVISH MOOD, THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT REFRAIN FROM REVERTING TO US APPARENT LACK OF INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA AS EVIDENCED AT THE QUITO CONFERENCE. HE SAID MOST LATIN AMERICANS HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS NOT INTERESTED IN THEM, BUT DID CONCEDE WHEN I SAID THAT ONLY LAST WEEK KISSINGER HIMSELF HAD GIVEN VERY IMPRESSIVE EVIDENCE TO THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER THAT IN FACT INDEED HE WAS INTERESTED IN LATIN AMERICA. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT REFRAIN FROM REPEATING TO THEBERGE WHAT HE HAD SAID TO ME, AND HERE I REPEAT TEXTUALLY: "YOU SAY THAT THE US PUT NO PRESSURE ON OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN THE VOTE AT QUITO. I HAVE EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY." COMMENT. HERE UNDOUBTEDLY PRESIDENT PEREZ WAS ADVERTING TO MISINFORMATION FROM HIS FRIEND TORRIJOS IN PANAMA AND TO THAT ZOMBIE LEGEND THAT THE UNITED STATES BRIBED HAITI TO ABSTAIN BY THE OFFER OF 8 MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD A ROAD TO CAP HAITIEN.

5. OVER-ALL COMMENT. IT WAS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT WITH THE RECENT POSTPONEMENT OF THE BUENOS AIRES MFM IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, WHICH HE KNEW BY DIRECT TESTIMONY FROM HIS FOREIGN MINISTER THAT OUR SECRETARY OF STATE DEEPLY REGRETTED, CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WAS SEEKING TO ACCOMPLISH TWO THINGS: ONE, TO THROW UP A SMOKE-SCREEN OVER THE DEMISE OF THE BUENOS AIRES MFM, AND THE OTHER, TO BUILD UP A JURIDICAL POSITION IN WHICH VENEZUELA WILL TAKE THE LEAD AS CHAMPION OF OAS "CONSTITUTIONALITY." ALL OF THIS WOULD GILD HIS HALO OF LEADERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA.

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